

RUTHLESS WYCOMBE —JUST FOURTEEN DAYS TOO LATE!

by Argus

Clapton 1

Wycombe Wanderers 8

AN H. G. WELLS type Time Machine would have been welcomed by Wycombe Wanderers fans on Saturday. If only this was happening 14 days ago! Wycombe players, officials and fans joined in the same thought as the Isthmian League leaders crushed Clapton with a display of whiplash passing and shooting entirely in contrast to the lack-lustre cup performance against Hounslow a fortnight earlier.

Here was all the generous enthusiasm, buoyancy, first-time positive football so acutely absent from the Wanderers play against Hounslow.

Wycombe badly needed a morale booster, and this was certainly it. Poor Clapton never stood an earthly.

NO LETTING UP

Even when they were three... four... five goals up, the ruthless Wycombe forwards, skipping over the mud and slime with imperious ease, kept firing in vicious shots.

The score could easily have reached the teens. Wing half Johnny Weaver smacked the ball against the woodwork three times and Paul Bates and Cliff Trott both missed comparatively simple second half chances.

Admittedly, the opposition was from the League bottom basement—the dice were heavily loaded against the injury-smitten Essex side at the moment—but on this form the Wanderers were in the mood to knock down anybody.

All the goals were beauties. Clapton's nimble goalkeeper, Ed. McAlpine, soaked in mud from many valiant dives, could not be faulted with any of them, from Gerald Free's fine opening goal to full-back John Beck's Big Bertha drive from just inside the home half, which completed the scoring.

I have never seen the Wycombe forwards in such savage shooting form. The shots whistled into the net with sweet fluency. Equally delightful from a Wanderers viewpoint was the approach work which led to the goals.

The situation called for an open game with plenty of quick long-ball passing and Wycombe did just that with deadly efficiency.

DICTATORS

Anticipating the flow of the game with uncanny skill, inside men Ron Fryer and Cliff Trott baffled the Clapton defenders with the ease with which they dictated the exchanges, and Gerald Free and Len Worley saw all they wanted of the ball.

Some of the right wing skirmishes of Trott and Worley were soccer dreams. But the man who really ran Clapton dizzy was Paul Bates, as elusive as a fox. His three first half goals were magnificently earned.

Clapton's teenage forward line was far too inexperienced to trouble Wycombe's confident defence—it might be a different story in two seasons' time if these promising young men continue to develop—and Dennis Syrett had a quiet afternoon.

QUICK LEAD

The first 13 minutes killed the Clapton interest in the points for the Wanderers surged into a three goal lead. Intelligent sixth-sense work by Free made the first. He inspired and followed a movement to its conclusion to score easily.

Then came the goal of the match. Outleaping everybody in the Clapton goalmouth to meet a Worley cross, Cliff Trott planted a beautifully-judged header to the foot of Ron Fryer. The little inside-left put astonishing power into his drive and it roared past McAlpine from an acute angle.

Two determined goal-bids by Bates led to the third goal. Twice frustrated, he chased a through pass, beat centre-half Ken Pope and shot in the same motion to crack a storming goal.

ONE-SIDED

As the Wanderers tore the fragile Clapton defence to shreds the game became pathetically one-sided. Hero McAlpine was an undaunted barrier and had some deserved luck. He was left helpless by two fine goal-scoring drives from Bates and was unfortunate to see Trott's shot spin slowly into the net after he had half parried an out-of-the-blue volley.

With six goals in the bag, Wycombe took the foot off the gas and Clapton pleased their fans with a courageous series of attacks early in the second half. Even when Fryer accepted a speared pass from Jimmy Truett and scored at his leisure, Clapton kept plugging away and Pope, forgetting all about defence, strode upfield to net.

Just to prove that Pope was not the only defender with scoring ideas, John Beck ended the Wycombe goal bonanza with the sort of shot which gives goalkeepers nightmares, a thumping 50-yarder which left McAlpine stranded in his penalty area mud.